

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8586

INFO AMCONSUL BRISBANE

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AMCONSUL PERTH

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

UNCLAS CANBERRA 5317

EO 11652: NA

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SUBJ: WARNING ON USE OF BENZODIAZEPINE AND MEPROBAMATE BY
PREGNANT WOMEN

1. AUSTRALIAN NEWS BROADCASTS TODAY CARRIED ITEM REGARDING RESULTS OF RESEARCH BY U.S. HEALTH AUTHORITIES INTO USE OF BENZODIAZEPINE AND MEPROBAMATE DRUGS BY PREGNANT WOMEN. NEWS ITEM STATED THAT RESEARCH HAD SHOWN THAT USE OF THESE DRUGS IN THE FIRST MONTHS OF PREGNANCY COULD CAUSE DEFECTS SUCH AS CLEFT LIP AND PALATE.

2. AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAS REQUESTED EMBASSY ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING DETAILED INFORMATION ON RESULTS OF THIS RESEARCH, WHICH APPARENTLY IS BEING CARRIED OUT BY DRS. OAKLEY AND SAFRA, CANCER AND BIRTH DEFECTS DIVISION BUREAU OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL, DHEW, ATLANTA. IN AUSTRALIA, THE BENZODIAZEPINE GROUP OF DRUGS DOES CARRY WARNINGS TO DOCTORS RE PRESCRIBING TO PREGNANT WOMEN. APPARENTLY MEPROBAMATE DRUGS DO NOT CARRY SUCH A WARNING AND THE AUSTRALIAN HEALTH AUTHORITIES ARE PARTICULARLY ANXIOUS TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ON RESEARCH ON THIS GROUP OF DRUGS.

3. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING ASAP ANY INFO WE CAN PASS ON TO THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT REGARDING THIS MATTER.

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PAGE 02 CANBER 05317 230912Z

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